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SUBJECT: USAU AMB COURVILLE HEARS ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN
MINISTRY VIEWS ON SOMALIA AND THE AU

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11. (C) In the course of a December 20 meeting with U.S. Ambassador to the African Union, Ethiopian Minister of State Dr. Tekeda Alemu stressed that Ethiopia looked for dialogue in good faith with the Islamic Courts in Somalia, but would not be committed to dialogue in the abstract. Ethiopia's by nature a status quo power, Dr. Takeda said. Ethiopia would gain no benefit from a military conflict in either Somalia or Eritrea, and its commitment to dialogue is second to none. He admitted that Ethiopia had been concerned by June/July movement of ICU toward Baidoa, and thus had to take some action, but now Ethiopia was politically in a laid back attitude.

12. (C) Dr. Tekeda welcomed Ambassador into a network of good contacts, but would not speculate on future leadership of the AU, commenting only that terms of the Commission and the Annual Chair of the AU Assembly are coming to a close. He closed with the remark that he has a Doctorate in International Relations, thus has an affinity with Ambassador Courville, and that the AU becomes more of a focal point as Africa has now come into the mainstream of world affairs.

AUTHORIZED BY AMBASSADOR COURVILLE

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